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PERSONNEL RESEARCH SERIES



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USDA PERSONNEL POLICY SURVEY

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USDA PERSONNEL POLICY SURVEY

A Report to the Personnel Policy  
Review Meeting Evaluation Committee

Albert S. Glickman

Personnel Research Staff

Office of Personnel

United States Department of Agriculture

Washington, D. C.





## SUMMARY AND HIGHLIGHTS

This survey was undertaken at the request of the 1961 Personnel Policy Review Meeting (PPRM) Evaluation Committee.

## SAMPLE

Responses to a questionnaire, distributed in August 1963, were received from 676 top level officials, both line and staff (including personnel officers), in Washington and the field. The composition of the sample is shown in Exhibit 1 (page 4).

## QUESTIONNAIRE

The questionnaire contained 98 statements concerning personnel policies, practices and procedures. These were derived from answers, given by people who had attended the PPRM, to four "open-end" questions distributed in August of 1962, to obtain judgments as to whether:

- a. the recommendations of the 1961 PPRM were having their desired effect, and
- b. there were additional problems needing attention.

Respondents were asked "to respond to each item based upon your own observations in your particular situation," and to react to each statement in one of five ways:

A = strongly agree

a = agree

o = neither agree nor disagree, or...cannot react

d = disagree

D = strongly disagree.

(In all analyses A and a were combined and d and D were combined.)

Responses to item 99, asking for "other comments," were not analyzed here.

## ANALYSES

Overall Response Frequencies provided the number of Aa, o, and dD responses made to each of 98 items for the total of 676 cases.

A consensus rank was determined for 68 items where 50% or more of the respondents chose one of the three response categories.

Comparative analyses, more "diagnostic" in nature, were performed to bring out the effects of several more specific influences upon the responses made. Three Chi-square analyses of each item were made to locate statistically significant differences (at or beyond the 2% confidence level) in distribution of responses:

a. among seven agency groups

AMS - Agricultural Marketing Service

ARS - Agricultural Research Service

ASCS - Agricultural Stabilization and Conservation Service

FHA - Farmers Home Administration

FS - Forest Service

SCS - Soil Conservation Service

OTHER - all smaller offices and agencies combined

b. between those holding Line and Staff positions

c. between those located in Washington headquarters and those located in the Field (everyone outside Washington headquarters).

## RESULTS

The essential data for each item are compiled in Appendix A. Highlights of the data are featured in seven exhibits in the text.

Overall Response Frequencies.

Responses to single opinion items must be interpreted cautiously. Where there is substantial response consensus, the risk of ambiguity of interpretation is less. In Exhibit 2 (page 9), 15 items are listed that have more than 500 of the 676 responses assigned to one response category.



### Comparative Analyses.

Significant differences in response distributions were found:

- a. between Washington and Field for 61 items
- b. between Line and Staff for 13 items
- c. among the seven agency groups for 69 items.

The most salient finding is that over a wide variety of subject matter:

- a. Field people were much more likely to express favorable opinions regarding the statements of personnel policies, practices, and procedures;
- b. Washington headquarters personnel were more likely to express opinions indicating either
  - 1) more criticisms, or
  - 2) neutral, undecided, non-committal positions.

In ten instances the most often chosen response to a statement by the Washingtonians was the opposite of the response most often chosen by people in the Field.

Differences between Line and Staff which, of course, interact with Washington-Field influences, were much less frequently evidenced and permit less clear and general interpretation.

Both Washington-Field and Line-Staff factors, as well as factors specific to agencies, interact to influence the great variety of differences in response patterns found when agencies were compared, as illustrated by Exhibit 7 (pages 23 to 26).

### DISCUSSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Perhaps the most prominent observation about our findings is that they raise a warning flag against making generalizations from overall results obtained from an opinion survey in a dispersed and diverse organization such as USDA. It would be particularly hazardous to "read the pulse" of the Department or of agencies at the headquarters level, and then use that reading as the basis for diagnosis of the organization's general condition. Corroborative or contradictory evidence must be sought in the various constituencies of the organization.

We have found that people in different locations, in different line and staff capacities, and in different agencies respond in different ways to many statements of personnel policies, practices, and procedures. Our results provide some clues as to the sources of problems in personnel administration, such as: the possible foci of resistance to current practices or to innovations, or the places where recognition of certain kinds of problems is lacking, or where communication is faulty or information is lacking. They also give us indications of where support for given concepts is strong, acceptance is high, and of pathways to more effective implementation of policies and procedures.

In the Projected Work Plan OP-1, it was stated that if the results of the present survey indicated a need for further analyses and study, consideration would be given to the formation of a series of workshops "to refine and more completely define the problems, largely by determining the why of the problem." It was anticipated that the output of that phase of the project then "would be used with all other available judgment of the Department and agency officials in planning further action in meeting the personnel management needs of the Department." The information in this report warrants serious consideration of such additional follow-up. This report can serve as source document in that process.

It is recommended that further analyses and study proceed as previously planned by the PPRM Evaluations Committee and outlined in Projected Work Plan OP-1.

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'Albert S. Glickman', with a stylized, flowing script.

Albert S. Glickman  
Chief, Personnel Research Staff

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## USDA PERSONNEL POLICY SURVEY

## BACKGROUND

For more than two years the Office of Personnel has made a deliberate effort to use every practical means of keeping up to date on problems and needs of the Department which relate to the management of our manpower.

Most readers in USDA have some familiarity with the work of the 1961 Personnel Policy Review Meeting (PPRM) in Philadelphia at which key staff and operating officials of the Department and its agencies convened to focus attention on personnel policy problems and issues then current, and to initiate plans and programs to remedy defects and to increase effectiveness of personnel management. In order to facilitate implementation of the PPRM recommendations, to measure progress, and to maintain continuing alertness to that which remained to be done, a PPRM Evaluations Committee was established.<sup>1</sup>

On July 10, 1962, the Director of Personnel added to the responsibility of this committee the obligation to recommend steps that should be taken to supplement the actions of the PPRM.

The Committee recommended that a survey be made of all top level officials, both line and staff, in Washington and the field, to ascertain their judgments as to whether: (1) the recommendations of the 1961 PPRM were having their desired effect, and (2) there were additional problems needing attention.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Present members of the PPRM Evaluations Committee:

- A. C. Caldwell, Administrator, Commodity Exchange Authority
- E. H. F. Felber, Director, Farm Programs Division, Agricultural Stabilization and Conservation Service
- C. Hendee, Deputy Chief, Administration, Forest Service
- C. O. Henderson, Assistant Director, Office of Personnel (Chairman)
- J. B. Holden, Director, Graduate School
- V. C. Mohagen, Director, Personnel Division, Soil Conservation Service
- J. E. Tromer, Assistant to Director, Personnel Division, Agricultural Marketing Service

<sup>2</sup>The work project (OP-1) of which this survey is a part is outlined in the Office of Personnel's "Projected Work Plans for Fiscal Year 1964." The research plan was developed in collaboration with the PPRM Evaluations Committee.



## DEVELOPMENT OF THE QUESTIONNAIRE ON PERSONNEL POLICY

The raw material for the present questionnaire came from the first PPRM follow-up questionnaire distributed in August of 1962 to those who had attended the Philadelphia meeting. These people had answered four "open-ended" questions to indicate: (1) what PPRM recommendations they considered to be most helpful; (2) which ones were ineffective or limiting; (3) whether appropriate emphasis and priority had been given to implementation of recommendations; and (4) new problems that had arisen since the meeting.

From the replies, about 150 key statements were extracted.<sup>3</sup> These, in turn, were screened and edited to produce 98 items for the present questionnaire (which are included in Appendix A to this report).

Respondents were asked "to respond to each item based upon your own observations in your particular situation," and to react to each statement in one of five ways:

If you strongly agree with the statement, circle A.

If you agree with the statement, circle a.

If you neither agree nor disagree, or if you feel that you cannot react to the statement, then circle o.

If you disagree with the statement, circle d.

If you strongly disagree with the statement, circle D.

Item 99 said: "If you have any other comments that you would like to make, oriented to past, present, or future personnel policy and practices, please do so here." These comments are not dealt with in this report.

## DISTRIBUTION OF THE QUESTIONNAIRE

One thousand questionnaires were prepared. These were apportioned to agencies and offices with the recommendation that they be sent to each official in positions such as those listed below:

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<sup>3</sup> These statements and the questionnaire employed can be found in Appendix A of the "Anniversary Report on the Results of the 1961 Personnel Policy Review Meeting," USDA, October 1962, with the exception of four items contributed by Office of Personnel staff (15, 4, 97, 98) to cover policies and programs of more recent origin.

## Field

State Directors

Regional Foresters

Forest Supervisors

State Administrative Officers

Regional Personnel Officers or Office Managers

## Washington

Division Chiefs or comparable positions

Assistant Administrators for Management

Agency Personnel Officers and Heads of major functional units in the Personnel Division

The covering letter to "selected top management officials of the Department," dated August 16, 1963, is included as Appendix B to this report. Responses were requested by September 16.

To permit specific analyses to be made, the respondents were asked to identify their agency, state, and whether they served in a line or a staff capacity. The respondent's name was not requested.

A preaddressed postcard was provided, to be mailed separately from the questionnaire, to indicate interest in receiving a report of the results of this survey.

## THE RESPONDENT SAMPLE

Included in the analyses reported are 676 questionnaires that were received by September 23, 1963. Only about two percent more returns were received after that date. The number of requests to receive a report was 393.

The composition of the sample is shown in Exhibit 1. First the composition of the total sample is given. The numbers in parentheses are the approximate percentage equivalents. There follow, in alphabetical order, the subsamples of the six largest agencies, plus a grouping of the data for all remaining smaller agencies under the heading "Other,"<sup>4</sup> with absolute numbers of cases and percentages correspondingly arranged.

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<sup>4</sup>To simplify discourse in this report, the generic use of "agency" will apply to these seven groups.

## Exhibit 1

## Sample Composition

Sample	Wash.		Field		Total	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
TOTAL						
Line	58	( 9)	299	(44)	357	( 53)
Staff	122	(18)	197	(29)	319	( 47)
Total	180	(27)	496	(73)	676	(100)
AMS						
Line	9	(20)	17	(37)	26	( 57)
Staff	7	(15)	13	(28)	20	( 43)
Total	16	(35)	30	(65)	46	(100)
ARS						
Line	3	( 6)	24	(47)	27	( 53)
Staff	3	( 6)	21	(41)	24	( 47)
Total	6	(12)	45	(88)	51	(100)
ASCS						
Line	9	(13)	20	(30)	29	( 43)
Staff	11	(16)	28	(41)	39	( 57)
Total	20	(29)	48	(71)	68	(100)
FHA						
Line	0	( 0)	20	(32)	20	( 32)
Staff	8	(13)	34	(55)	42	( 68)
Total	8	(13)	54	(87)	62	(100)
FS						
Line	0	( 0)	138	(76)	138	( 76)
Staff	23	(13)	21	(11)	44	( 24)
Total	23	(13)	159	(87)	182	(100)
SCS						
Line	1	( 1)	41	(47)	42	( 48)
Staff	6	( 7)	40	(45)	46	( 52)
Total	7	( 8)	81	(92)	88	(100)
OTHER						
Line	36	(20)	39	(22)	75	( 42)
Staff	64	(36)	40	(22)	104	( 58)
Total	100	(56)	79	(44)	179	(100)



It is apparent, from comparison of the total percentages with the agency percentages, that the Washington-Field, Line-Staff composition of the subsamples vary widely. This needs to be kept in mind when the results are discussed later, when comparisons of results are made by Agency, by Line versus Staff, and by Washington versus Field. Since the agencies and their organizational components vary considerably in terms of size, geographical distribution, functions, and organization, it is to be expected that the subsamples should also vary in composition. However, it has been assumed for the purpose of this study that each agency properly interpreted the objectives and instructions conveyed to them and, within the guidelines provided, sent the questionnaires to the top level program and personnel administrators whose views and judgments concerning personnel policy were most influential in each agency. In that sense, the response aggregate from each agency is considered representative of the viewpoints of that agency, and a proper basis for comparison with response aggregates of the other agencies. It was also necessary to assume that no biases that were peculiar to particular agencies existed in the non-respondents. To the extent that the reader does not accept such assumptions as reasonable, he must qualify accordingly the interpretations of findings offered in the following pages.

## ANALYSIS OF DATA

### Overall Response Frequencies

The first and simplest analysis of the data provided the number of "agree," "neutral," and "disagree" responses made to each of the 98 items for the total of 676 cases. In all analyses and presentation of results the two degrees of agreement (A and a) and the two degrees of disagree response (d and D) were combined.

### Comparative Analyses

The remaining analyses were more "diagnostic" in nature. They sought to bring out the effects of several more specific influences upon the responses made. This was done by making three basic comparisons to locate significant differences in distribution of responses: (1) among the seven agencies, (2) between those holding Line and Staff positions, and (3) between those located in the Washington headquarters of the agencies and those located in the Field (everyone outside the Washington headquarters).

The main statistical technique employed was the Chi-square test of significance. The fundamental question that is asked in this Chi-square analysis is: Do the observed distributions of responses of the groups being studied differ significantly from the distribution theoretically expected, or can the differences be attributed to fluctuations that could occur by chance? The base used for the theoretically expected distribution was the proportion of responses given in each of the three

alternative categories (Aa, o, dD) by the total sample of 676 respondents. In literal terms, what is represented here is a test of the significance of difference of each subgroup distribution from the total distribution of all respondents. No absolute standard is inferred as to what is a "right" answer or what distribution of responses is "good." Hence, the fact that a group is "different," should not, by itself, be taken to indicate that it is "better" or "worse" than other groups with which it is being compared.

The statistical definition of significance used here was the 2% level of confidence. That is, a difference was considered to be significant if it were of such magnitude that it would be likely to occur by chance less than two times in one hundred. A Chi-square test was applied to each of the three comparative analyses of each item.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

In Appendix A a summary of results is provided. For each item the following information is given:

- (1) Questionnaire item number
- (2) Item text
- (3) Total response distribution (Aa, o, dD)
- (4) "Observed (O)" and "expected (E)" frequencies of response for those agencies showing the largest proportionate deviations from the theoretical distribution. In each case, the data from the alternative that deviated most are underlined. If the overall Chi-square test showed the differences among agencies to be attributable to chance, no entries are shown.
- (5) O and E frequencies where Line and Staff distributions differed significantly. The data for the alternative that deviated most are underlined. No entry indicates no significant difference was found.
- (6) O and E frequencies where the distribution of Washington and Field responses differed significantly. The data for the alternative that deviated most is underlined. Again, no entry indicates that the difference was not significant.
- (7) A consensus rank is given for 68 items where 338 (50%) or more of the respondents chose one of the three response alternatives. All other items are marked XX. A consensus rank of 1 indicates the highest degree of consensus.



To facilitate cross reference and interpretation, the items are grouped under category headings based upon relatedness of content. These categories are:

- 1-A-1 Efficiency in Personnel Work--Delegation
- 1-A-2 Efficiency in Personnel Work--Services and Procedures
- 1-B Effectiveness in Getting the Employees We Want
- 2-A Employee Performance--Information Systems
- 2-B Employee Performance--Discipline and Grievances
- 2-C Employee Performance--Suggestion Systems
- 3-A Using Employees Effectively--Staffing
- 3-B Using Employees Effectively--Training
- 4 Classification, Pay, and Allowances
- 5-A Effectiveness of Communication--Written
- 5-B Effectiveness of Communication--To and From Management
- 5-C Effectiveness of Communication--Personnel Matters
- 5-D Effectiveness of Communication--ADP
- 5-E Effectiveness of Communication--Department Image
- 6 Minority Groups
- 7 Employee Organizations
- 8 Health, Safety, Welfare and Facilities
- 9 PPRM Follow-Up

The volume of results is copious. It would be manifestly impractical to enter into an exhaustive interpretation of the results. In general, it is more appropriate for the personnel and program officials most concerned with each of the findings to explore its meaning against the background of their specific situation. Hence, we will content ourselves with calling attention to some of the more prominent findings, offering some approaches to interpretation of the findings, and illustrating ways in which the findings may be put to further use by management. This paper is offered as a starting point for further evaluation of personnel policies, rather than a place to offer conclusions.

## Overall Responses

Responses to single items of opinion must be interpreted with caution. Equal caution must be exercised in making comparisons of the frequency of alternative responses. This is so, because neither the "zero-point" nor the "neutral-point" are the same for all items. A change in the wording of an item will almost inevitably change the distribution of responses to that item. These cautions are particularly applicable where a considerable division of opinion is reflected in the frequency with which the alternatives are chosen by the respondent sample. Where, however, there is a substantial consensus favoring one alternative the risk of ambiguity of interpretation is less. Small differences between items should not be given weight in interpretation in any case.

In Exhibit 2, the top 15 consensus items are listed in order, with the category number and distribution of responses shown for each. All of these items have more than 500 of the 676 responses assigned to one response category.

Using this list of top consensus items as a point of departure, some possible interpretations may be offered. We will do this by referring to the categories of items represented in the list.

1-A-1. Efficiency in Personnel Work--Delegation. Of nine items that fall in this category, only two have a majority consensus (items 25 and 51). Only item 25 is among the top 15. This appears to be the most general statement of the nine. It seems that there is a very general endorsement of delegation as "good," but no correspondingly strong indications of consensus with regard to specific aspects of delegation.

1-A-2. Efficiency in Personnel Work--Services and Procedures. It can be seen that item 54 ranks first in consensus. Again we have a rather general expression, reflecting anxiety about a paper deluge.

2-B. Employee Performance--Discipline and Grievances. Of the eight items that fall in this category, six are found among the items having a majority consensus (items 21, 34, 63, 65, 66, 73), with three of these among the top ten (21, 34, 63). This would seem to indicate that among the higher levels of management in the Department there is considerable concern about proper handling of cases of discipline and unsatisfactory performance.

3-B. Using Employees Effectively--Training. All of the four items (10, 39, 59, 89) found in this category are responded to with a majority consensus. Three of these (items 39, 59, 89) are in the top fifteen. Of these, two items (39, 89) specifically refer to supervisory and executive training needs, and the third inferentially embraces this area.

5. Effectiveness of Communications. The greatest number of items, derived from the statements of the PPRM members previously surveyed, are

## Exhibit 2

## Top 15 Consensus Items

Consensus Rank	Category	Responses			Item
		Aa	o	dD	
1	1-A-2	654	18	4	(54) We need to guard against the ever increasing amount of paperwork in Personnel administration.
2	5-B	626	27	23	(27) USDA management has responsibility for seeking advice of workers.
3	5-A	619	38	19	(71) "Tips to Supervisors" are generally good.
4	1-A-1	617	38	21	(25) Delegated authority has resulted in a saving of time, effort, and money.
5	4	574	73	29	(31) We need a positive program to achieve equal pay for equal work between agencies.
6	2-B	564	40	72	(63) Few people are well informed on disciplinary procedures.
7	2-B	564	32	80	(21) Part of management's job is to rehabilitate and reorient career employees who have been deemed at least temporarily unsatisfactory.
8	6	562	84	30	(97) Recruitment practices should be developed which demonstrate the open-door policy for all qualified applicants regardless of race, creed, or national origin.
9	2-B	554	79	43	(34) OP should publish abstracts of significant disciplinary cases with comments for the guidance of agencies.
10	3-B	538	54	84	(59) The Department should evaluate outside training courses and refer to agencies only those of greatest benefit.
11	5-E	535	101	40	(49) Managers at the Department level need to give special emphasis to improving the image of the Department.
12	3-B	530	76	70	(89) We need more emphasis on first line supervisory training.
13	4	522	49	105	(43) Many employees are limited in their ability to accept transfers because of financial losses involved in the move.
14	3-B	510	62	104	(39) We need more emphasis on executive development.
15	9	160	503	13	(57) A good job has been done on follow-up actions after the PPRM.



in the communications areas. Three are in the list of top 15 (items 27, 49, 71), and two are among the top three in consensus rank (items 27, 71). These seem to bear upon the satisfaction of needs for information through the initiation of communication processes by the higher ranks of management in the Department.

6. Minority Groups. There appears to be a generally high level of endorsement of nondiscriminatory employment policy, with item 7 achieving eighth rank in consensus agreement. The specific meaning attributed to this endorsement is revealed when the distribution of responses to item 15 is taken into account. The statement that "members of minority groups should be given special attention in order for them to catch up," has a consensus rank of 53 in disagreement.

9. PPRM Follow-Up. Item 57, which ranks fifteenth, illustrates a different kind of consensus. The "neutral" or "no reaction" alternative is most often endorsed with regard to effectiveness of PPRM follow-up actions. The other item (19) that appears in this category "the work planned on PPRM recommendations is in important areas," with the rank of 21, also showed the same kind of consensus.

It might be well, before closing this section, to point out that it is wise not to overlook the o response category as a source of information, as illustrated in the paragraph above. About a dozen of the 68 items for which consensus is established are of this kind. Such results may indicate, on the one hand, lack of information or unclear understanding of the given personnel policy or practice; or, on the other hand, that the respondents do not attribute much importance to the item; or a combination of the two.

### Comparative Analyses

Up to this point we have been considering the results from the standpoint of degree of agreement or consensus shown in the overall item response patterns. The subsequent analyses are primarily designed to shed light upon the ways in which different groups respond differently to the various items. This permits us to come closer to identifying specific influences contributing to the formation of opinion.

Washington versus Field. The first set of results to be examined involves the comparison of responses made by people in Washington headquarters activities with those made by people in the Field. Chi-square analyses for the 98 items turned up 61 items where differences between Washington and Field responses were significant at the 2% level of confidence or better. In Appendix A, the "observed" and "expected" frequency distributions are provided for these 61 items. To provide a point of departure for some general interpretations, as well as for closer study of specifics that readers may wish to pursue, these 61 items are tabulated in Exhibit 3.

In Exhibit 3, item numbers are listed under their category designations in the same order as they appear in Appendix A. The column in

## Exhibit 3

Most Significantly Different Alternative Responses--  
Washington Versus Field

Groups	Responses							Totals
	Aa		o				dD	
Washington	<u>2-A</u>	<u>4</u>	<u>1-A-1</u>	<u>2-A</u>	<u>3-B</u>	<u>5-B</u>	<u>2-A</u>	
	72	26	56	77	39	69	84	
O > E	<u>2-C</u>	<u>5-B</u>	86	23	4	<u>5-C</u>	<u>6</u>	
	62	18	52	98	83	28	97	
	<u>3-B</u>	<u>8</u>	50	<u>2-B</u>	78	95		
	10	81	51	34	43	<u>5-E</u>		
			3	63	94	74		
			4		64			
			<u>1-B</u>	<u>2-C</u>	<u>5-A</u>	<u>8</u>		
			70	67	68	80		
			96	<u>3-A</u>		11		
			90	9				
		(6)		58		(31)	(2)	(39)
Field	<u>7</u>		<u>4</u>			<u>1-A-1</u>	<u>2-B</u>	<u>4</u>
	76		29			20	75	5
O > E			82				16	
			<u>5-D</u>			<u>1-A-2</u>	73	<u>5-B</u>
			8			7	66	44
						<u>1-B</u>		1
						87	<u>2-C</u>	<u>5-D</u>
						33	17	35
						53	<u>3-A</u>	<u>8</u>
						85	92	12
							91	
		(1)				(3)	(18)	(22)
Totals		(7)				(34)	(20)	(61)

Note: Item numbers are listed under category designations in the same order as they appear in Appendix A. The column in which the item number appears indicates the alternative which showed the greatest proportionate difference between Washington and Field. The row in which the item number appears identifies the group for which the observed was greater than the expected frequency of that response (O > E).



which the item number appears indicates the alternative which showed greatest proportionate difference between Washington and Field. The row in which the item number appears identifies the group for which the actually observed frequency was greater than the expected frequency of that response ( $O > E$ ). The circled numbers in each cell indicate the number of items found in that cell.

As an example of how to read the table, let us take the entry which appears in the lower left-hand section. This shows that item 76 was responded to significantly differently by Washington and Field. Item 76 is one of the items in category 7. For that item the greatest difference between Washington and Field was in the proportion of "agree" responses the two groups made. The Field group gave proportionately more Aa responses than did the Washington group. There was only one item with these response characteristics.

When interpreting this table, one needs to keep in mind that we are dealing with relative and not absolute frequency of responses.

In Exhibit 3 certain differences between Washington and Field are striking. Note that where significant differences exist they are of two principal kinds. The Washington headquarters personnel select the Aa or the o response much more often than theoretically expected, while the Field personnel are much more likely to be found making a dD response to these items. So distinct is the difference that, with almost complete disregard of the item content, if a group chose Aa or o with significantly greater than expected frequency, you can correctly identify it as Washington 37 out of 41 times; and if dD was the alternative chosen more frequently than expected, the chances are 18 out of 20 that it is the Field group.

Seeking to find additional meaning in this difference between Washington and the Field, we examine more closely the text of the items to which each group gave a disproportionately great number of Aa or dD responses. These show a remarkably consistent pattern.

All of the statements (in the lower right-hand corner of Exhibit 3) with which the Field group disagreed more often than the Washington group, are critical of current policies or practices in personnel administration. Examples of these items (one from each category) are the following:

- 1-A-1    20. Too many actions are required to be submitted for prior approval.
- 1-A-2    7. We are too slow to make changes in government personnel methods.
- 1-B       87. We cannot adequately "sell" recruits in competition with industry unless we can have them see our facilities and talk with our top scientists and managers.

- 2-B 75. Unsatisfactory performance is poorly handled in government.
- 2-C 17. The suggestion system is not working well.
- 3-A 92. Due to CSC statistical program and MODE, the workload for operating units of personnel offices is excessive.
- 4 5. The effectiveness of recruitment is limited because we cannot pay interview expenses.
- 5-B 44. There is need to establish a more adequate system to keep employees informed about USDA's policies and programs.
- 5-D 35. People fear for their jobs because they do not understand ADP.
- 8 12. Office space facilities are inadequate.

Item 76, the only one to which Field personnel gave a significantly greater proportion of agree responses, is partly critical of present personnel policy. The need for employee unions was questioned. But, at the same time, other elements of present policies were endorsed by rationalizing the attitude toward unions "in light of the protections afforded by laws, executive orders, and the Civil Service Commission."

On the other side of the coin, the eight items to which the Washington group gave more Aa or dD responses, all represent less favorable or more critical positions with regard to personnel policies.

These are the statements Washington headquarters people tended proportionately more often to agree with than did the Field people:

- 2-A 72. Performance ratings should be abolished.
- 2-C 62. The suggestion system is more trouble than the results justify.
- 3-B 10. It is difficult from the materials on training courses sent to the agencies to determine the merits of courses.
- 4 26. Those employed by firms with government contracts pay much more for comparable competence.
- 5-B 18. Higher level officials tend to withhold facts and information that those under them should know.
- 8 81. Medical units should be prepared to treat colds and other minor ailments which have well established medical procedures for treatment.



These are the statements Washingtonians disagreed with more often:

- 2-A 84. Relating within-grade increases to employees' level of performance has proven beneficial to employee and management.
- 6 97. Recruitment practices should be developed which demonstrate the open-door policy for all qualified applicants regardless of race, creed, or national origin.

Before proceeding with a discussion of what these results may mean, let us take a look at Exhibit 4, which presents the pattern of responses from a somewhat different angle. We are dealing here with the question: In which instances was the same response most often chosen by the two groups, and in which instances was a different response most often chosen by each group? Exhibit 4 contains the same 61 items where significant differences exist. This time we tabulated the most often chosen response of the Washington group against the most often chosen response of the Field group.

Items that show not only a significant difference in proportionate response distribution, but where the response most often chosen by the two groups also differs, probably point to areas in which the most difficulties may arise in the conduct of personnel administration. The most extreme case would be that in which the most general opinion of one group is diametrically opposed to that of the other. Statements with which Washington most often agreed, but Field disagreed are:

- 2-A 72. Performance ratings should be abolished.
- 2-C 67. The Department offices need to do more to stimulate suggestions from employees.
- 2-C 17. The suggestion system is not working well.
- 3-A 9. Staffing of personnel offices has not kept pace with changes in the nature of work.
- 4 5. The effectiveness of recruitment is limited because we cannot pay interview expenses.
- 5-B 18. Higher level officials tend to withhold facts and information that those under them should know.
- 5-B 1. Employees have not been provided with sufficient knowledge about their part in USDA defense activities.
- 5-D 35. People fear for their jobs because they do not understand ADP.
- 8 12. Office space facilities are inadequate.

## Exhibit 4

Most Often Chosen Responses for Items Significantly  
Different in Response Distribution--Washington Versus Field

Most Often Chosen Washington Response						Totals
Aa		o		dD		
Most Often Chosen Field Response	dD	$\frac{2-A}{72}$	$\frac{5-B}{18}$	$\frac{1-A-1}{52}$	$\frac{2-C}{62}$	
			1	4		
		$\frac{2-C}{67}$	$\frac{5-D}{35}$	20		
		17				
		$\frac{3-A}{9}$	$\frac{8}{12}$			
		$\frac{4}{5}$	(9)	(3)	(1)	(13)
	o	$\frac{2-B}{75}$		$\frac{1-A-1}{56}$	$\frac{2-B}{16}$	
					73	
				$\frac{1-B}{33}$	66	
				70	$\frac{3-A}{92}$	
			90	91		
		(1)	(9)	(0)	(10)	
Most Often Chosen Field Response	Aa	$\frac{1-A-2}{7}$	$\frac{4}{83}$	$\frac{1-A-1}{86}$	$\frac{5-B}{69}$	$\frac{7}{76}$
			26	50	$\frac{5-C}{95}$	
		$\frac{1-B}{87}$	29	51		
		53	82	3	$\frac{5-E}{74}$	
		96	43	$\frac{1-B}{85}$		
			94		$\frac{8}{11}$	
		$\frac{2-A}{77}$	64	$\frac{3-A}{58}$		
		23	$\frac{5-A}{68}$			
		98		$\frac{4}{78}$		
		84	$\frac{5-B}{44}$			
		$\frac{2-B}{34}$	$\frac{5-C}{28}$			
		63				
		$\frac{3-B}{10}$	$\frac{5-D}{8}$			
		39				
			$\frac{6}{97}$			
			$\frac{8}{80}$			
			81			
			(26)	(11)	(1)	(38)
	Totals		(36)	(23)	(2)	(61)

Note: Two items (9, 67) were assigned an equal number of Aa and dD responses by the Field. These were tabulated in the dD category because the greatest difference between "observed" and "expected" frequency was in that category.

The statement with which the Field agreed, but Washington disagreed is:

- 7        76. The need for employee unions is questionable in light of the protections afforded by laws, executive orders, and the Civil Service Commission.

In summary of the 98 questionnaire items, we find that:

37 items show no significant differences in choice of alternatives by Washington and Field;

61 items do show significant differences, of which

36 items have the same alternative most often chosen by both groups,

25 items have different alternatives most often chosen by the two groups, of which

10 items involve choice of opposite positions by the two groups.

We are now at an appropriate place to review the results of our comparative analyses of Washington and Field questionnaire responses and to explore for possible meanings. The major benefit of this exploration will be the stimulation of questions; not the development of conclusions. More definitive conclusions as to what lies behind these empirical results must await closer examination by appropriate responsible groups or individuals in the offices, agencies, and units directly affected.

Perhaps the most prominent observation at this point is that our findings raise a warning flag against making generalizations from overall results obtained from an opinion survey in a dispersed and diverse organization such as USDA. It is quite clear, from the results presented, so far, that the geographical constitution of the sample will, in large part, determine the distribution of responses obtained. Thus we have observed that with regard to many important matters of personnel policy and practice the views of Washington headquarters and Field management personnel differ quite considerably. This can be so, even when the general response consensus is high, as it is for the top 15 consensus items, among which significant differences are found in response distributions of four items (34, 39, 63, 97). Therefore, it would be hazardous to "read the pulse" of the Department or of agencies at the headquarters level, and then use that reading as the basis for diagnosis of the organization's general condition. Corroborative or contradictory evidence must be sought in the various constituencies of the organization.

Specifically we note, over a wide variety of subject matter, that the Field respondents incline to a less critical or more favorable disposition toward current personnel policies and practices than do



headquarters managers; whereas the Washington people are more likely to be found in either a more critical-unfavorable position, or else in a middle-of-the-road, neutral, undecided, non-committal or uncommitted position.

Why is this so? We can only conjecture. Let us pose some questions that may be useful for those pursuing further investigation or discussion.

Does the more critical posture of the headquarters group stem from the fact that serious problems tend to be fed into Washington, whereas more "normal" conditions are less likely to be brought to headquarter's attention? May it be that, like the psychiatrist who spends most of his time with people who have problems, top level management tends to regard the world as populated with people who have problems. If this be so, measures need to be introduced to assure a more balanced perspective among those who make the top level decisions.

On the other hand, does the greater propensity of the Washington group to choose a middle position reflect a broader perspective that gives consideration to aspects of situations that are not known to those in the field, so that the Washingtonians are less inclined to view situations in black or white terms, but rather as falling in the gray area between? Or does this simply reflect that the Washington group often feels that it does not have sufficient information to establish a position? Or do the conflicting pressures to which headquarters personnel are subjected tend to condition them to hedge their expressions of opinion? Or is there something about their experience or the way that they are selected that tends to make them a less decisive group?

Does the greater satisfaction with current conditions manifested by the people in the field perhaps represent greater conservatism, lesser inclination toward change and initiative, contentment with the status quo, or anxiety that expressions of discontent may not be well-received at the upper echelons? Or does this represent a symptom of concern lest departures from the status quo heap more burdens and confusion upon the forces afield than they already are contending with? Or is it literally true that there are less personnel policy problems in the field than in Washington?

Whatever the answer to questions such as these may be, it does seem that communication between management in Washington and management in the field might be profited by a close look. To the extent that these two groups fail to share a common understanding of the meaning, reasons for, and effects of personnel policies and practices, personnel administration will be correspondingly handicapped. This does not mean that they must always hold the same views, but that they should be aware when, where and how they do differ and comprehend the grounds for difference.

One further observation is appropriate as a guide to interpretation of data such as this. It cannot be assumed, because a statement presents the same words to all respondents, that these words have the same meaning for all respondents in different locations, in different job capacities, at different levels, and at different times. The "slices of life" from which different groups of respondents derive their reaction to the various statements are different. Their observations, experiences, needs, objectives, and priorities are different. Hence, though response differences may in some part be attributable to misinterpretations, communication deficiencies, or information lacks; also contributing to these differences are the actual differences in needs and experiences found at headquarters and in the field. As has already been suggested, an overall or average reaction pattern to a given statement provides us with quite limited information. The more specifically we can attribute attitudes and opinions to specific groups, constituting our management population in this instance, the better position we are in to diagnose the condition so as to obtain a deeper understanding of what lies behind these differences, and to develop or modify our policies so as to take the specific needs and purposes of the various groups into account in a practical and realistic way.

Line versus Staff. Moving now to the comparison of responses given by Line and Staff respondents, we have presented in Exhibits 5 and 6 results comparable to those given in Exhibits 3 and 4.

We see immediately that the number of items for which the responses of Line and Staff differed significantly (13) is much less than the number for which differences between Washington and Field were found (61). All of the items shown in Exhibit 5 turn out to be those to which the Staff personnel responded with greater than expected frequency to the most significantly different alternative response. For these items the Staff favored an agree response:

- 2-A 72. Performance ratings should be abolished.
- 2-C 62. The suggestion system is more trouble than the results justify.
- 3-A 92. Due to CSC statistical program and MODE, the workload for operating units of personnel offices is excessive.
- 3-A 91. Increased workload because of conversion to MODE, etc., tends to retard upgrading in quality of technical staffs.
- 3-A 38. The management intern program tends to the creation of a super-class employee.
- 5-D 35. People fear for their jobs because they do not understand ADP.
- 8 81. Medical units should be prepared to treat colds and other minor ailments which have well established medical procedures for treatment.

## Exhibit 5

Most Significantly Different Alternative Responses--  
Line versus Staff

Group	Responses			Totals
	Aa	o	dD	
Line				
O > E	0	0	0	0
Staff	$\frac{2-A}{72}$ $\frac{2-C}{62}$ $\frac{3-A}{92}$ 91 38	$\frac{5-D}{35}$ $\frac{8}{81}$ $\frac{9}{57}$ 19 9	$\frac{5-C}{95}$ $\frac{8}{11}$  2	$\frac{3-B}{39}$ $\frac{6}{97}$  2
Totals	9	2	2	13



## Exhibit 6

### Most Often Chosen Alternatives for Items Significantly Different in Response Distribution--Line Versus Staff

		Most Often Chosen Line Response				Total
		Aa	o	dp		
Most Often Chosen Staff Response	dD			$\frac{2-A}{72}$	$\frac{3-A}{38}$	
		(0)	(0)	$\frac{2-C}{62}$	(3)	(3)
	o		$\frac{3-A}{92}$ 91 $\frac{9}{57}$ 19			
		(0)	(4)		(0)	(4)
	Aa	$\frac{3-B}{39}$ $\frac{5-C}{95}$ 11		$\frac{5-D}{35}$		
		(5)	(0)		(1)	(6)
	Totals	(5)	(4)		(4)	(13)

- 9      57. A good job has been done on follow-up actions after the PPRM.
- 9      19. The work planned on PPRM recommendations is in important areas.

To these statements an o response was more often given:

- 5-C    95. More OP representatives should be getting into the field.
- 8      11. USDA Library facilities should be made available to field offices.

The disagree response was favored for these items:

- 3-B    39. We need more emphasis on executive development.
- 6      97. Recruitment practices should be developed which demonstrate the open-door policy for all qualified applicants regardless of race, creed, or national origin.

In Exhibit 6, these same 13 items are tabulated to show the alternative most often chosen by each group, and we see that with one exception (item 35) both Line and Staff chose the same alternative most frequently even though there were significant differences in the proportion with which each group selected the various alternatives.

In summary of the 98 items, we find that:

85 items show no significant differences in choice of alternatives by Line and Staff;

13 items do show significant differences, of which

12 items have the same alternative most often chosen by both groups;

1 item has opposite alternatives most often chosen by the two groups.

Taken together, the results suggest that there is considerably less risk in generalizing from opinions of Line to Staff and vice versa than in taking the opinions of either the Washington or Field groups as representative of the other. It appears that geographical differences have a stronger influence on opinions regarding personnel policy among USDA managers than does location on the organization chart.

We might venture to suggest some possible reasons for this. One of these may be that distinctions based upon geography are more clear-cut than can be developed between "Line" and "Staff." Along these lines, it seems reasonable to infer that differences in size, dispersion, missions,

programs, location, et al, give different definitions to these two terms in different agencies and even different parts of individual agencies. Furthermore, the differences in Washington and Field representation in the Line and Staff groups tend to obscure differences that might theoretically be attributable exclusively to the influence of Line and Staff status. An indication of this may be seen by referring back to Exhibit 1, in which the totals show that people who say that they are in Line positions are infrequently found in Washington. In our sample, Staff people are correspondingly more frequently found in Washington. We might expect, therefore, that the response patterns for these 13 items for the Staff group would more often match the Washington than the Field group. Inspection of Appendix A data indicates some such tendency, though not very strongly. The patterns of Staff and Washington distributions show similar profiles in eight instances, but not in five others. All of the latter are found either in category 3-A or category 9.

Agencies. As noted earlier, for each item alternative response, frequency statistics are shown in Appendix A only when statistically significant differences in response distribution were found, and entries were made there only for those agencies that differed most, proportionately, from the total distribution of responses for each such item.<sup>5</sup>

There were 69 items for which significant differences were found. In Appendix A, the magnitude and direction of difference between observed and expected frequency of responses can be noted. To make for easier reference by agencies, Exhibit 7 has been prepared. In that Exhibit we have identified for each agency the items listed for it in Appendix A. The column in which an X has been placed shows the single alternative response for which the greatest proportional difference was found, and whether this difference was in the direction of "more than" or "less than" the expected frequency. (The O and E frequencies for that response are also underlined in Appendix A.)

This Exhibit can serve as a point of departure for further study by individual agency or departmental personnel. We will not presume to interpret here the particular hypothetical and practical meanings attributable to the findings for each agency group. However, a number of general cautions may be in order.

<sup>5</sup>To reduce the computational burden, an arbitrary standard was employed to define the "most different" agency groups. This consisted of ranking the agencies in the order of the magnitude of their contribution to the total Chi-square value for each item,  $\frac{(O - E)^2}{E}$ . Then, the group

with the highest value was entered, and each succeeding group in rank, until the cumulative value equalled or exceeded one-half the overall Chi-square value. Of 69 items for which significant differences existed, 3 agencies per item were selected in 6 instances, 2 agencies per item were selected in 52 instances, and one agency was selected in 11 instances.



## Exhibit 7

Agency Responses That Differed Most  
Significantly from Total Distribution

Category	Item	Aa		o		dD	
		More	Less	More	Less	More	Less
		0 > E	0 < E	0 > E	0 < E	0 > E	0 < E
<u>AMS</u>							
3-B	59				X		
5-B	69				X		
<u>ARS</u>							
1-A-2	55			X			
1-B	6					X	
2-A	98						X
	84			X			
2-B	73					X	
	63					X	
3-B	59					X	
4	32	X					
	5						X
5-A	68			X			
5-D	8			X			
8	12			X			
9	19	X					
<u>ASCS</u>							
1-A-2	55	X					
1-B	45			X			
	87			X			
	53			X			
	96					X	
2-A	72	X					
4	94		X				
	64			X			
5-B	69	X					
5-E	93	X					
	49				X		
7	79				X		

## Exhibit 7

(Continued)

Category	Item	Aa		o		dD	
		More	Less	More	Less	More	Less
		O > E	O < E	O > E	O < E	O > E	O < E
<u>FHA</u>							
1-A-1	56				X		
	51				X		
1-B	85					X	
	70					X	
2-A	98					X	
	84				X		
2-C	17					X	
3-A	92	X					
	91	X					
4	43					X	
	5		X				
5-E	93					X	
6	15	X					
7	76			X			
<u>FS</u>							
1-A-1	56						X
	86	X					
	4				X		
1-B	6	X					
2-A	72		X				
2-B	66					X	
2-C	62		X				
3-A	41					X	
	9				X		
	58				X		
4	83				X		
	78	X					
5-A	68				X		
5-B	18					X	
	44					X	
	1					X	
5-C	2		X				
	13					X	
5-D	35		X				
5-E	49			X			
7	76				X		
	14					X	
	79		X				
8	80				X		
	81					X	
	46				X		
	12						X
	11					X	

## Exhibit 7

(Continued)

Category	Item	Aa		o		dD	
		More	Less	More	Less	More	Less
		O > E	O < E	O > E	O < E	O > E	O < E
<u>SCS</u>							
1-A-1	3	X					
	20					X	
1-A-2	55				X		
	7					X	
1-B	87					X	
	85					X	
	90					X	
2-A	36				X		
2-B	75					X	
	16	X					
	34				X		
3-A	41				X		
	92					X	
	91					X	
4	32					X	
	78					X	
	64					X	
5-D	8				X		
6	15	X					
8	30					X	
	81		X				
	12					X	
9	57	X					
	19	X					
<u>OTHER</u>							
1-A-1	86			X			
	52			X			
	50		X				
	51		X				
	3			X			
	4					X	
1-A-2	7						X
1-B	45						X
	70						X
	96			X			
	90						X
2-A	98			X			
2-B	75						X
	16			X			
	73						X
	66						X
	63						X



## Exhibit 7

(Continued)

Category	Item	Aa		o		dD	
		More	Less	More	Less	More	Less
		O > E	O < E	O > E	O < E	O > E	O < E
OTHER (Continued)							
2-C	62			X			
	17						X
3-A	9			X			
	58			X			
3-B	59			X			
4	83			X			
	43			X			
	94			X			
5-B	18	X					
	44						X
	69			X			
	1			X			
5-C	28			X			
	95			X			
	2	X					
	13						X
5-D	35	X					
5-E	74		X				
7	76			X			
8	80			X			
	46					X	
	11			X			

Note: Direction of deviation is shown for proportionately most deviant alternative response ( $O > E$  = "observed" more than "expected";  $O < E$  = "observed" less than "expected").

First, no special importance can be attributed to the differences in the number of items listed for each agency inasmuch as these numbers correspond roughly with the size of the agency samples. It is to be expected that where the respondent sample is relatively small, as in the first four agencies, the reliability of statistics will be correspondingly limited, so that fewer differences are likely to emerge as statistically significant.

Then, it must be recalled that differences in the Washington-Field and Line-Staff composition of the agency subsamples importantly influence the overall distribution of responses of the several agencies.

Also note that we have marked in Exhibit 7 only the largest proportional difference. In many instances other large differences exist between O and E frequencies of response alternatives. Appendix A needs to be referred to for the more basic data.

### CONCLUDING STATEMENT

Through a questionnaire survey of top level officials throughout USDA, we set out to add to our knowledge as to whether: (1) the recommendations of the 1961 PPRM were having their desired effect, and (2) there were additional problems needing attention.

In the preceding sections, we have seen that people in different locations, in different line and staff capacities, and in different agencies respond to many statements of personnel policies, practices, and procedures, in different ways. As we have said earlier, the fact that a group is "different" from other groups with which it is being compared does not, standing alone, indicate that the group is "good" or "bad." Our results can only provide some clues as to the sources of problems in personnel administration, such as: the possible foci of resistance to current practices or to innovations, or the places where recognition of certain kinds of problems is lacking, or where communication is faulty or information is lacking. They also give us indications of where support for given concepts is strong, acceptance is high, and of pathways to more effective implementation of policies and procedures.

In the Projected Work Plan OP-1, it was stated that if the results of the present survey indicated a need for further analyses and study, consideration would be given to the formation of a series of workshops "to refine and more completely define the problems, largely by determining the why of the problem." It was anticipated that the output of that phase of the project then "would be used with all other available judgment of the Department and agency officials in planning further action in meeting the personnel management needs of the Department." The information in this report warrants serious consideration of such additional follow-up. This report can serve as a source document in that process.

It is recommended that further analyses and study proceed as previously planned by the PPRM Evaluation Committee and outlined in Projected Work Plan OP-1.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> The basic data IBM cards used in the analyses reported are being retained for further use, if required. An index card file of the "open-end" comments of respondents is also available as a potential reference source.



## APPENDIX A

### Results Summary

The description of the contents of this Appendix will be found at the beginning of the RESULTS AND DISCUSSION section of the report (pages 6 to 7).

Con-

sen-

sus

Cate-  
gory

Item

Rank

EFFICIENCY IN PERSONNEL WORK--DELEGATION

1-A-1

56. The Department's policy as it relates to  
excepted appointments should be relaxed.

XX

Sample

Aa      o      dD  
0   E   0   E   0   E   Total

Total

158

321

197

676

FHA

20

14

18

29

24

18

62

FS

45

43

106

86

31

53

182

WASH.  
FIELD

28

42

107

85

45

52

180

130

116

214

236

152

145

496

1-A-1

86. Classification of key field positions  
should be delegated.

XX

Total

282

258

136

676

FS

110

76

48

69

24

37

182

OTHER

50

75

106

68

23

36

179

WASH.  
FIELD

55

75

103

69

22

36

180

227

207

155

189

114

100

496

1-A-1

52. Discipline has been too highly centralized.

XX

Total

204

200

272

676

OTHER

34

54

95

53

50

72

179

WASH.  
FIELD

45

54

89

53

46

72

180

159

150

111

147

226

200

496

1-A-1

50. There should be greater delegation of  
investigative authority.

XX

Total

227

244

205

676

OTHER

34

60

91

65

54

54

179

WASH.  
FIELD

50

60

83

65

47

55

180

177

166

161

179

158

150

496

Con-  
sen-  
sus  
Cate-  
gory  
Item  
Rank

## Responses

Sample  
O Aa E O o E O dD E Total

1-A-1 51. Delegated authority for pre-employment checks has been effectively implemented.

65

Total	350	274	52	676
FHA	50	32	9	25
OTHER	61	93	99	73
WASH.	48	93	121	73
FIELD	302	257	153	201
			11	14
			41	38
				180
				496

1-A-1 25. Delegated authority has resulted in a saving of time, effort, and money.

4

Total	617	38	21	676
-------	-----	----	----	-----

1-A-1 3. Delegated authority for removal actions has been effectively implemented.

XX

Total	289	260	127	676
SCS	65	38	12	34
OTHER	39	77	110	69
WASH.	52	77	96	69
FIELD	237	212	164	191
			32	34
			95	93
				180
				496

1-A-1 4. There has not been sufficient follow-up in the area of delegating authority to ensure that Department policy is adhered to.

XX

Total	149	248	279	676
FS	42	40	45	67
OTHER	43	39	89	66
WASH.	39	40	86	66
FIELD	110	109	162	182
			55	74
			205	180
				496



Con-

sen-

Cate-

gory

Item

Rank

1-A-1

20. Too many actions are required to be submitted for prior approval.

XX

Sample

O

E

O

E

O

E

Total

Total

241

195

240

676

SCS

10

31

19

25

59

31

88

WASH.

69

64

74

52

37

64

180

FIELD

172

177

121

143

203

176

496

# EFFICIENCY IN PERSONNEL WORK--SERVICES AND PROCEDURES

1-A-2

55. There should be further consolidations of common services.

XX

Total

301

134

241

676

ARS

15

23

16

10

20

18

51

ASCS

42

30

10

13

16

24

68

SCS

40

39

8

17

40

31

88

1-A-2

7. We are too slow to make changes in government personnel methods.

68

Total

338

104

234

676

SCS

36

44

7

14

45

30

88

OTHER

107

90

34

28

38

62

179

WASH.

102

90

38

28

40

62

180

FIELD

236

248

66

76

194

172

496

1-A-2

54. We need to guard against the ever increasing amount of paperwork in personnel administration.

1

Total

654

18

4

676

Responses

Aa

O

E

O

E

O

E

dd



Category	Item	Sus Rank	Con-	sen-	Rank	Responses							
						Aa				dD			
						Sample	O	E	O	E	O	E	Total
1-B	33.	The Civil Service Commission's staff should handle FSEE requests for certification more promptly.	49			Total	239	380	57	676			
						WASH.	67	64	108	101	5	15	180
						FIELD	172	175	272	279	52	42	496
1-B	53.	We need greater authority to commit jobs during campus interviews.	60			Total	358	173	145	676			
						ASCS	21	36	38	17	9	15	68
						WASH.	107	95	56	46	17	39	180
						FIELD	251	263	117	127	128	106	496
1-B	85.	The delay in getting eligibles rated is excessive.	XX			Total	276	227	173	676			
						FHA	19	25	11	21	32	16	62
						SCS	24	36	21	30	43	23	88
						WASH.	75	73	87	60	18	46	180
1-B	70.	Lack of authority to take on Boards of Examiner's duties creates problems of recruiting GS-2 - GS-5 clerical workers.	34			FIELD	201	202	140	166	155	127	496
						Total	136	405	135	676			
						FHA	10	12	27	37	25	12	62
						OTHER	40	36	124	107	15	36	179
1-B						WASH.	21	36	143	108	16	36	180
						FIELD	115	100	262	297	119	99	496



Con-  
sen-  
sus  
Cate-  
gory

Item

Rank

Responses

Sample

Aa		o		dD		Total
O	E	O	E	O	E	

1-B

96.

When Boards of Examiners and Regional Civil Service offices do not maintain registers for a given type of position, Regional Civil Service offices should be permitted to authorize agencies to use registers outside the jurisdictional area of the Regional Civil Service office.

23

Total	466	181	29	676
ASCS	39	47	19	18
OTHER	100	123	73	48
WASH.	101	124	76	48
FIELD	365	342	105	133
			3	7
			26	21
				180
				496

1-B

90.

Functions and responsibilities of Examining Boards need to be clarified.

57

Total	229	368	79	676
SCS	23	30	38	48
OTHER	58	61	116	97
WASH.	49	61	120	98
FIELD	180	168	248	270
			11	21
			68	58
				180
				496

# EMPLOYEE PERFORMANCE--INFORMATION SYSTEMS

2-A

77.

The present programs of merit promotion, performance evaluation, and training should be better coordinated.

17

Total	485	93	98	676
WASH.	126	129	39	25
FIELD	359	356	54	68
			83	72
				180
				496

2-A

23.

Civil Service Commission guidance is needed to coordinate quality performance increases and incentive awards.

XX

Total	298	123	255	676
WASH.	78	79	48	33
FIELD	220	219	75	90
			54	68
			201	187
				180
				496

Category	Item	Rank	Responses					
			Aa		O		D	
			O	E	O	E	O	E
			Total		Total		Total	

2-A 72. Performance ratings should be abolished. 44

Total	253	34	389	676
ASCS	41	25	1	3
FS	45	68	8	9
LINE	103	134	24	18
STAFF	150	119	10	16
WASH.	90	67	9	9
FIELD	163	186	25	25
			81	104
			308	285
				180
				496

2-A 98. Present methods used to establish performance standards are difficult for the supervisor to apply. 33

Total	407	69	200	676
ARS	41	31	5	5
FHA	26	37	8	6
OTHER	106	108	29	18
WASH.	103	108	32	18
FIELD	304	299	37	51
			155	45
			147	53
				180
				496

2-A 36. If MOHR is to succeed, we must have a practical appraisal, evaluation, and recording system. 52

Total	375	292	9	676
SCS	83	49	5	38
			0	1
				88

Con-  
sen-  
sus  
Cate-  
gory

Item

Rank

Responses

Sample

Aa

O E

O E

Total

2-A 84. Relating within-grade increases to employees' level of performance has proven beneficial to employees and management.

59

Total 361 200 115 676

ARS 19 27 22 15 10 9 51

FHA 43 33 9 18 10 11 62

WASH. 71 96 60 53 49 31 180

FIELD 290 265 140 147 66 84 496

# EMPLOYEE PERFORMANCE--DISCIPLINE AND GRIEVANCES

2-B 75. Unsatisfactory performance is poorly handled in government.

XX

Total 253 277 146 676

SCS 25 33 32 36 31 19 88

OTHER 75 67 83 73 21 39 179

WASH. 82 67 78 74 20 39 180

FIELD 171 186 199 203 126 107 496

2-B 21. Part of management's job is to rehabilitate and reorient employees who have been deemed at least temporarily unsatisfactory.

7

Total 564 32 80 676

2-B 16. The Department's penalty guide for disciplinary actions should be revised.

XX

Total 235 316 125 676

SCS 49 31 23 41 16 16 88

OTHER 44 62 115 84 20 33 179

WASH. 53 63 114 84 13 33 180

FIELD 182 172 202 232 112 92 496



Category	Item	Rank	Con- sen- sus	Responses												
				Aa					o					dD		Total
				O	E	O	E	O	E	O	E	O	E			
2-B	34.		OP should publish abstracts of significant disciplinary cases with comments for the guidance of agencies.	Total	554		79		43		676					
		9		SCS	87	72	1	10	0	6	88					
				WASH.	136	147	32	21	12	11	180					
				FIELD	418	406	47	58	31	32	496					
2-B	73.		Documentation and specification of offenses are unclear in many disciplinary actions.	Total	159		396		121		676					
		40		ARS	8	12	20	30	23	9	51					
				OTHER	28	42	138	105	13	32	179					
				WASH.	35	42	130	105	15	32	180					
				FIELD	124	117	266	290	106	89	496					
2-B	66.		Disciplinary decisions are made with inadequate background to assure equal penalties for equal offenses.	Total	116		372		188		676					
		56		FS	32	31	84	100	66	51	182					
				OTHER	26	31	122	99	31	50	179					
				WASH.	31	31	117	99	32	50	180					
				FIELD	85	85	255	273	156	138	496					
2-B	63.		Few people are well informed on disciplinary procedures.	Total	564		40		72		676					
		6		ARS	36	43	3	3	12	5	51					
				OTHER	158	149	11	11	10	19	179					
				WASH.	152	150	18	11	10	19	180					
				FIELD	412	414	22	29	62	53	496					

Con-  
sen-  
sus  
Rank

Responses

2-B 65. OP's role in handling grievances should be examined.

Total 190 413 73 676

30

# EMPLOYEE PERFORMANCE--SUGGESTION SYSTEMS

2-C 62. The suggestion system is more trouble than the results justify.

42

Total 175 107 394 676  
FS 29 47 23 29 130 106 182  
OTHER 63 46 46 28 70 104 179

LINE 76 92 56 57 225 208 357  
STAFF 99 83 51 50 169 186 319

WASH. 68 47 38 28 74 105 180  
FIELD 107 128 69 79 320 289 496

2-C 67. The Department offices need to do more to stimulate suggestions from employees.

XX

Total 272 136 268 676  
WASH. 64 72 56 36 60 71 180  
FIELD 208 200 80 100 208 197 496

2-C 17. The suggestion system is not working well.

XX

Total 296 87 293 676  
FHA 19 27 2 8 41 27 62  
OTHER 103 78 33 23 43 78 179

WASH. 98 79 36 23 46 78 180  
FIELD 198 217 51 64 247 215 496

Con-  
sen-  
sus  
Category  
Item  
Rank

USING EMPLOYEES EFFECTIVELY--STAFFING

3-A 41. We need more guidance on staffing changes in moving into ADP.

31

3-A 92. Due to CSC statistical program and MODE the workload for operating units of personnel offices is excessive.

41

3-A 9. Staffing of personnel offices has not kept pace with changes in the nature of work.

XX

Sample	Responses				Total
	Aa	O		dD	
	O	E	O	E	
Total	413		189	74	676
FS	81	111	67	51	182
SCS	72	54	6	25	88
Total	199		396	81	676
FHA	39	18	15	36	68
SCS	31	26	37	52	88
LINE	85	105	226	209	357
STAFF	114	94	170	187	319
WASH.	46	53	121	105	180
FIELD	153	146	275	290	496
Total	279		145	252	676
FS	90	75	24	39	182
OTHER	77	74	56	38	179
WASH.	77	74	53	39	180
FIELD	202	205	92	106	496





Category	Item	Rank	Con- sen- sus	58. There is a need for more management trainees in personnel administration.	XX	Responses							
						Sample	Aa		o		dD		Total
							O	E	O	E	O	E	
3-A						Total	317		256		103		676
						FS	111	85	44	69	27	28	182
						OTHER	62	84	90	68	27	27	179
						WASH.	61	84	91	68	28	27	180
						FIELD	256	233	165	188	75	76	496
USING EMPLOYEES EFFECTIVELY--TRAINING													

3-B	10. It is difficult from the materials on training courses sent to the agencies to determine the merits of courses.			Total	378		130		168		676
				WASH.	118	101	26	35	36	45	180
				FIELD	260	277	104	95	132	123	496

3-B	59. The Department should evaluate training courses and refer to the agencies only those of greatest benefit.			Total	538		54		84		676
				AMS	42	37	1	4	3	6	46
				ARS	35	41	5	4	11	6	51
				OTHER	139	142	23	14	17	22	179

3-B	89. We need more emphasis on first line supervisory training.			Total	530		76		70		676

Con -

sen -

sus

Rank

Responses

Aa

o

dD

SampleOEOEOETotalCate-  
goryItem

3-B

39.

We need more emphasis on training for executive development.

14

Total

510

62

104

676

LINE  
STAFF285 269  
225 24127 33  
35 2945 55  
59 49357  
319WASH.  
FIELD119 136  
391 37424 16  
38 4537 28  
67 76180  
496

## CLASSIFICATION, PAY, AND ALLOWANCES

4

31.

We need a positive program to achieve equal pay for equal work between agencies.

Total

574

73

29

676

5

4

32.

"Man-in-the-job" concept should be applied to additional fields.

Total

364

293

19

676

58

ARS  
SCS40 27  
48 4711 22  
34 380 1  
6 251  
88

4

83.

Revision of classification standards for clerical and administrative positions should be expedited.

Total

459

192

25

676

24

FS  
OTHER145 124  
99 12233 52  
75 514 7  
5 7182  
179WASH.  
FIELD94 122  
365 33781 51  
111 1415 7  
20 18180  
496



Cate- gory	Item	sus Rank	Aa						o						dD						Total																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																															
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4	26.	Those employed by firms with government contracts pay much more for comparable competence.																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																		</

Con-  
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Cate-  
gory

Item

Rank

Responses

Sample	Aa		O		dD		Total
	O	E	O	E	O	E	

4 94. More equitable reimbursement for cost of transfer from one station to another is needed.

22

Total	467		96		113		676
ASCS	26	47	22	10	20	11	68
OTHER	99	124	52	25	28	3	179
WASH.	112	124	54	26	14	30	180
FIELD	355	343	42	70	99	83	496

4 5. The effectiveness of recruitment is limited because we cannot pay interview expenses.

XX

Total	252		89		335		676
ARS	32	19	7	7	12	25	51
FHA	10	23	9	8	43	31	62
WASH.	101	67	32	24	47	89	180
FIELD	151	185	57	65	288	246	496

4 64. We are limited in effectiveness of recruitment because we are unable to offer competitive salaries to people with graduate degrees.

32

Total	410		103		163		676
ASCS	38	41	20	10	10	16	68
SCS	48	53	6	13	34	21	88
WASH.	110	109	38	27	32	43	180
FIELD	300	301	65	76	131	120	496

# EFFECTIVENESS OF COMMUNICATION--WRITTEN

5-A 68. Our written communications are too wordy.

26

Total	444		83		149		676
ARS	25	33	12	06	14	11	51
FS	143	120	12	22	27	40	182
WASH.	108	118	37	22	35	40	180
FIELD	336	326	46	61	114	109	496

Category	Item	sen- sus Rank	Con-	Responses					
				Aa		o		dD	
				<u>O</u>	<u>E</u>	<u>O</u>	<u>E</u>	<u>O</u>	<u>E</u>
5-A	71.	"Tips to Supervisors" are generally good.	3	Total	619	38	19	676	
5-A	48.	Restrictions on agency house organs should be reduced.		Total	222	286	168	676	
		XX							
EFFECTIVENESS OF COMMUNICATIONS--TO AND FROM MANAGEMENT									
5-B	18.	Higher level officials tend to withhold facts and information that those under them should know.	35	Total	189	82	405	676	
				FS	37	51	14	22	182
				OTHER	<u>70</u>	<u>50</u>	18	22	179
				WASH.	82	50	20	22	180
				FIELD	<u>107</u>	<u>139</u>	62	60	496
5-B	44.	There is need to establish a more adequate system to keep employees informed about USDA's policies and programs.	37	Total	403	85	188	676	
				FS	79	108	32	23	182
				OTHER	133	107	19	22	179
				WASH.	122	107	27	23	180
				FIELD	281	296	58	62	496

Con-  
sen-  
sus  
Cate-  
gory

Item

Rank

Sample

Aa  
O E

O E

dd  
O E

Total

Responses

5-B 69. Field representatives are being consulted more than they used to be two years ago.

XX

Total	282		294		100		676
AMS	29	19	9	20	8	7	46
ASCS	44	28	15	30	9	10	68
OTHER	54	75	102	78	23	26	179
WASH.	52	75	110	78	18	27	180
FIELD	230	207	184	216	82	73	496

5-B 27. USDA management has responsibility for seeking advice of workers.

2

Total	626		27		23		676
-------	-----	--	----	--	----	--	-----

5-B 1. Employees have not been provided with sufficient knowledge about their part in USDA defense activities.

XX

Total	307		81		288		676
FS	62	83	13	22	107	78	182
OTHER	92	81	38	21	49	76	179
WASH.	94	82	34	22	52	77	180
FIELD	213	225	47	59	236	211	496

# EFFECTIVENESS OF COMMUNICATION--PERSONNEL MATTERS

5-C 28. During the last two years the average employee's knowledge of personnel matters has increased.

19

Total	481		130		65		676
OTHER	95	127	55	34	29	17	179
WASH.	90	128	65	35	25	17	180
FIELD	391	353	65	95	40	48	496



Category	Item	Con- sen- sus Rank	Responses					
			Aa		o		Dd	
			0	E	0	E	0	E
			Sample		Total		Total	
5-C	95. More OP representatives should be getting into the field.	64	Total	353	200	123	676	
			OTHER	80	85	14	179	
			LINE	195	89	73	357	
			STAFF	158	111	50	319	
			WASH.	47	96	37	180	
			FIELD	306	104	86	496	
5-C	2. Smaller agencies are not provided with sufficient intelligence on Departmental personnel problems.	43	Total	121	390	165	676	
			FS	15	127	40	182	
			OTHER	57	73	49	179	
5-C	60. An inventory of possible thesis research topics among personnel problems should be made.	54	Total	226	372	78	676	
5-C	13. A more comprehensive review of needed legislation should be made.	45	Total	388	190	98	676	
			FS	87	49	46	182	
			OTHER	108	59	12	179	

Con-  
sen-  
sus  
Rank

Cate-  
gory

Item

## EFFECTIVENESS OF COMMUNICATION--ADP

5-D 42. There is need for keeping people more up to date on developments in ADP.

18

5-D 8. Many people cannot visualize how the ADP system can help Department operations.

16

5-D 35. People fear for their jobs because they do not understand ADP.

XX

Sample	Responses						Total
	Aa		o		dd		
	O	E	O	E	O	E	
Total	484		121		71		676
ARS	27	37	16	9	8	6	51
SCS	76	63	<u>3</u>	<u>15</u>	9	9	88
WASH. FIELD	143	129	<u>21</u>	<u>30</u>	16	20	180
	343	357	<u>93</u>	<u>84</u>	60	56	496
Total	486		114		76		676
FS	22	51	59	55	101	76	182
OTHER	<u>73</u>	<u>50</u>	54	54	52	75	179
LINE STAFF	73	99	106	107	178	151	357
	<u>115</u>	<u>89</u>	97	96	107	134	319
WASH, FIELD	66	50	59	54	55	76	180
	122	138	144	149	<u>230</u>	<u>209</u>	496

Category	Item	Rank	Responses					Total
			Aa	O	E	dD	E	
			<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>E</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>E</u>	

# EFFECTIVENESS OF COMMUNICATION--DEPARTMENT IMAGE

5-E	93.	The image of the Department has gone down in the past year or so.	Total	185		114		377	676
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		ASCS	31	19		3	11	34	38	68
		FHA	4	17		4	10	54	35	62

5-E	49.	Managers at the Department level need to give special emphasis to improving the image of the Department.	Total	535		101		40	676
-----	-----	--	-------	-----	--	-----	--	----	-----

		ASCS	63	54		4	10	1	4	68
		FS	123	144		44	27	15	11	182

5-E	74.	During the last two years the average employee in the field has come to feel more closely identified with USDA.	Total	355		214		107	676
-----	-----	---	-------	-----	--	-----	--	-----	-----

		OTHER	46	94		94	57	39	28	179
		WASH. FIELD	41	94		112	57	27	28	180
			314	260		102	157	80	79	496

5-E	22.	USDA Clubs furnish a "family feeling."	Total	299		254		123	676
-----	-----	--	-------	-----	--	-----	--	-----	-----

XX

## MINORITY GROUPS

6	15.	Members of minority groups should be given special attention in order for them to catch up.	Total	174		128		374	676
---	-----	---	-------	-----	--	-----	--	-----	-----

		FHA	27	16		12	12	23	34	62
		SCS	39	23		8	17	41	49	88

29



Cate- gory	Item	Rank	Con- sen- sus	Responses											
				Aa		o		dD							
				0	E	0	E	0	E	Total					
7	14.	Employee groups should hold periodic conferences with OP on improving the image of the Federal employee.													
		36													
7	79.	Employee groups should hold periodic conferences with OP on improving working conditions.													
		39													
HEALTH, SAFETY, WELFARE AND FACILITIES															
8	80.	We need greater effort in promoting safety.													
		46													
						</									

Con-  
sen-  
sus  
Cate-  
gory

Sample

Aa  
C E O E O dD  
E E E E E

Total

Responses

8 47. Government needs to pay more attention to the health of its upper grade people.

Total

451

97

128

676

25

8 81. Medical units should be prepared to treat colds and other minor ailments which have well established medical procedures for treatment.

Total

310

156

210

676

FS  
SCS

61 83  
18 40

38 42  
32 20

83 57  
38 27

102 88

XX

LINE  
STAFF

143 164  
167 146

87 82  
69 74

127 111  
83 99

357 319

WASH.  
FIELD

116 83  
194 227

22 42  
134 114

42 56  
168 154

180 496

8 46. Mandatory retirement should be at 70 for less active jobs but at a lower age for more active jobs.

Total

350

85

241

676

FS  
OTHER

120 94  
76 93

9 23  
24 22

53 65  
79 64

182 179

66

8 12. Office space facilities are inadequate.

Total

342

46

288

676

67

ARS  
FS  
SCS

14 26  
119 92  
25 45

8 3  
12 12  
5 6

29 22  
51 78  
58 37

51 182  
88

WASH.  
FIELD

143 91  
199 251

8 12  
38 34

29 77  
259 211

180 496

Cate- gory	Item	Rank	Con- sen- sus	11. USDA Library facilities are not readily available to field offices.	61	Responses								
						Aa		o		dD		Total		
						O	E	O	E	O	E			
8	Total	357		164	155		676							
	FS	79	96	33	44	70	42	182						
	OTHER	79	95	82	43	18	41	179						
	LINE	190	188	67	87	100	82	357						
	STAFF	167	168	97	77	55	73	319						
	WASH.	61	95	103	44	16	41	180						
	FIELD	296	262	61	120	139	114	496						
	PPRM FOLLOW-UP													
	9	57. A good job has been done on follow-up actions after the PPRM.												
		15												
Total		160		503	13		676							
SCS		39	21	48	65	1	2	88						
LINE		65	84	283	266	9	7	357						
STAFF		95	75	220	237	4	6	319						
9		19. The work planned on PPRM recommendations is in important areas.												
		21												
		Total	201		471	4		676						
		ARS	22	15	29	36	0	0	51					
	SCS	43	26	45	61	0	1	88						
	LINE	77	106	278	249	2	2	357						
	STAFF	124	95	193	222	2	2	319						

## APPENDIX B

Memoranda covering distribution of questionnaire



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE  
Office of Personnel  
Washington 25, D.C.

August 13, 1963

To: Agency Personnel Officers

From: Director of Personnel *Carl B Barnes*

Subject: Follow-up Questionnaire on Personnel Policy Review Meeting  
Recommendations and Personnel Problems That Remain

Section I of "Change," our Annual Report, outlines a 3 Step Process for setting up and achieving long-range goals in personnel management. Step 1, The Development of Goals, is under way. As you know, each agency has been asked to send us by September 16 a set of goals revised from the list given in "Change" (page 5). Step 2, Present Status of Personnel Management (page 9), will be needed before intelligent action can be taken on Step 3, Action Needed to Accomplish Goals (page 9).

The PPRM Evaluations Committee recommended that at an appropriate time another check be made not only on the effect of the PPRM recommendations but also on additional problems and changes needing attention, which will be used as a partial basis for Step 2. A questionnaire based on the results of a similar survey made one year ago has been designed by Dr. Glickman to accomplish both purposes.

The Committee further recommended that these questionnaires, with self-addressed envelopes, be sent each official in positions such as those listed below:

Field: State directors  
Regional foresters  
Forest supervisors  
State administrative officers  
Regional personnel officers or office managers

Washington: Division chiefs or comparable positions  
Assistant Administrators for Management  
Agency personnel officers and heads of major functional units in the personnel divisions

We need the responses by September 16.

More detailed plans for this can be found under Item C of OP-1, "Integrated Planning of Personnel Management," Projected Work Plans for Fiscal Year 1964.

Questions about the survey should be directed to Chris Henderson, extension 6955, or Al Glickman, extension 6106.

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE  
Office of Personnel  
Washington 25, D.C.

August 16, 1963

To: Selected Top Management Officials of the Department

From: Director of Personnel

Subject: Follow-up on Recommendations of Personnel Policy Review Meeting  
and Personnel Problems That Remain.

In September 1961 a Personnel Policy Review Meeting was held in Philadelphia. Most of you have heard of it by now, I think. Some of you were there.

A large number of recommendations came out of that meeting. Of course, these recommendations have real meaning only when they are acted upon. How effectively they have been acted upon, we can only find out by obtaining the reactions of people who are in a position to observe effects.

One year ago we asked people who had been at the Philadelphia meeting to give us a reading on progress in implementing its recommendations. They told us what they felt had been accomplished. They told us even more about what remained to be done. And they also called to our attention some new questions.

Now we want to take another reading to check our progress. We also want to plan ahead. This information will be useful for accomplishing long-range personnel management goals which are now being developed.

This time we want to get the word from a broadly representative group of line and staff managers across the country. To do this we have made up a questionnaire consisting of items drawn from the previous roundup of reactions. We would like to have each of you respond to each item, based upon your own observations in your particular situation. We expect that there will be differences of opinion on some items. That is one of the things we need to know.

To help us develop the most useful analysis of the results, please respond to every item in accordance with instructions given and provide the necessary identifying information. We are not trying to pinpoint organizational units or individuals (you will note that your name is not called for), but the value of the information that we derive from this questionnaire will

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be directly proportional to the number of returns we get. So please fill it out as soon as you can and return it to me in the envelope provided before September 16, 1963.

If you would like to receive a copy of a report of the results, use the postcard provided. Mail it separately from the questionnaire.

Thank you for your contribution to effective management in the Department of Agriculture and toward making it a better place in which to work.

*Carl B. Barnes*

Attachments





